



Department of Public Safety
Minnesota Office of Justice Programs

2022-23 Violent Crime Enforcement Team (VCET) Grant Program

GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

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Request for Proposals (RFP) Part 1: Overview

1.1 General Information

- Grant Name: Violent Crime Enforcement Team (VCET) Grant Program
- [Minnesota Office of Justice Programs \(OJP\) Website](#)
- Open for Applications: September 8, 2021
- Application Due Date: October 8, 2021 at 4:00 pm.

1.2 Program Description

Violent Crime Enforcement Teams (VCETs) investigate and prosecute narcotics, gangs and associated violent crimes. Multijurisdictional approaches that incorporate the expertise of prosecutors, law enforcement personnel and criminal analysts from local, state and federal agencies working cooperatively are most effective in addressing complex narcotics and gang investigations. Jurisdictions working together enhance resource sharing, interagency coordination and information exchange to target and disrupt persistent criminals and criminal enterprises. This approach is intended to target drug distribution networks, firearm crimes, violent gang activity and related serious criminal activity beyond the investigative resources of individual agencies.

VCET priorities include:

- Mid- and upper-level dealers
- Drug seizures
- Gun seizures
- Gang disruption
- Violent crimes

1.3 Minnesota's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

It is State of Minnesota policy to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion in making competitive grant awards. See Executive Order [19.01](#).

The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. See [OGM Policy 08-02](#).

1.4 Funding and Project Dates

Funding

The Minnesota state legislature appropriated funds to support multijurisdictional VCET grants in state statute 299A.642 subd. 9.

Funds authorized by 42 U.S.C. §3751(a) through the Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program also support the VCET grant program.

Approximately \$10 million in state and JAG funds are available. No match is required, but evidence of local agency contributions in the budget narrative will strengthen the application.

Project Dates

These projects have a two-year grant period, with a start date of January 1, 2022.

1.5 Eligible Applicants

Local units of government, tribes, county sheriff offices, and police departments are eligible to apply for VCET funding.

1.6 Questions, Technical Assistance and Information Sessions

Please submit any questions regarding this RFP by email to Kristin.lail@state.mn.us. Answers will be posted on the VCET RFP Questions and Answers page on the grants page of the [OJP website](#).

Application Information Sessions

OJP will offer two online webinars with Questions and Answers sessions. In the webinars staff will provide background on the VCET grant program, walk through the RFP and application requirements, and give an overview of the application review process. At the end of each session, staff will open it up for questions. However, not required, prospective applicants are encouraged to participate in at least one information session. Questions and answers from all of the webinars will be posted on the Frequently Asked Questions' page on the OJP Website.

Application Information Webinar Dates:

- New Applicants: Thursday September 16, 2021 at 2:00 pm - Registration Required via Zoom
- Current Grantees: Tuesday September 21, 2021 at 10:00 am - Registration Required via Zoom

RFP Part 2: Program Details and Requirements

2.1 Background Information

In 2010, the Minnesota Legislature established the Violent Crime Coordinating Council (VCCC) to provide guidance related to the investigation and prosecution of gang, drug and related violent crime. Council responsibilities include the development of investigative protocols, operational procedures and multijurisdictional structure to best address gang and drug issues. The Council drafted a Guidelines Manual that must be adopted in order to qualify for grant funding. In addition, Minnesota Statute 299A.642 subd. 4, requires that all multijurisdictional entities must be certified in order to receive VCET grant funding (detailed in application section E).

2.2 Project Requirements

VCETs must incorporate the following elements that have proven successful:

1. VCET must be comprised of at least three separate law enforcement agencies. *Multi-county VCETs are required in counties with a population of less than 100,000.*
2. VCET must have at least 3 full-time officers assigned and co-location of the VCET officers is strongly preferred. There can also be additional full-time, part-time or liaison officers assigned.
3. VCET must be under the operational direction of a full-time commander or team leader.
4. VCET targets violent offenders and/or felonies that have the likelihood of being related to the distribution of narcotics and/or other cases that have a significant multijurisdictional impact.
5. VCET operates in accordance with the Multijurisdictional Task Force Operating Procedures and Guidelines Manual and adheres to any other requirements for procedure or accountability that may be adopted by the Violent Crimes Coordinating Council.
6. An active governing board is in place that meets at least quarterly and plays a significant role in developing and monitoring VCET priorities, budgets, and operational policies and procedures. The board must hold staff accountable for adhering to the Guidelines Manual and for producing meaningful results in accordance with jurisdictional threats and strategies.
7. VCET has a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) that addresses a formal framework for planning and coordination of case activities. Membership, personnel commitments, targets, operations, resources, equipment, use of forfeitures, and management and liability are specific topics that must be addressed in the JPA.
8. VCET enters data into any statewide system implemented for the purpose of information sharing or officer safety. This includes gang information, as well as RISSnet and eTrace.
9. Seizures of cash, real property and personal property must be completed in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations and all VCETs must promptly report forfeitures in accordance with MN. Statute 609.5315, subd. 6.
10. Net forfeiture proceeds must be claimed and used for the benefit of the VCET when the related case is considered and reported as a VCET arrest.
11. All VCETs will be reviewed annually for compliance with statutory certification requirements in Minnesota Statute 299A.642 establishing the Violent Crimes Coordinating Council (VCCC).

2.3 Ineligible Project Expenses and Other Considerations

Include but are not limited to:

- Capital expenses such as building improvements or facility remodeling.

- Funding must supplement, not supplant state and local government funds.
- Other items unallowable with federal funds. (Reference in the [DOJ Financial Guide](#))

RFP Part 3: Application Process and Instructions

3.1 Application Deadline

All applications must be submitted using the [e-grants](#) web-based system by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, October 8, 2021. Applications cannot be submitted after this time. No paper submissions will be accepted.

3.2 Application Submission Instructions

Applications must be submitted via e-grants, the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) online grants management system. [e-grants](#) can also be accessed via the Office of Justice Programs [website](#). If you have never applied for a grant with the Office of Justice Programs, create a user account by clicking on the purple “New User” option in the login box in the upper right corner of the e-grants website and follow instructions to fill out the profile. Contact the e-grants Helpdesk at 1-800-820-1890 if you have login issues.

3.3 Terms and Conditions, Grant Program Guidelines, OJP Grant Manual

As part of submitting this application in e-grants the applicant agency agrees to the Terms and Conditions of OJP Grantees for applicants as well as the JAG Program Guidelines. These address federal and state requirements such as worker’s compensation, civil rights, affirmative action, and data privacy. By agreeing to these in e-grants the applicant is confirming that they have the ability to make these commitments. Applicants are encouraged to print and review these documents with the appropriate agency staff prior to submitting the application in e-grants. If selected for funding, the grantee will need to submit required certifications. Grantees agree to follow the OJP [Grant Manual](#), which provides basic information on policies and procedures for grant administration. These documents become, by reference, part of the formal grant contract agreement.

3.4 Federal Grants Application Requirements

A DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number and an active registration in [SAM.gov](#) (System for Awards Management) are requirement for these funds. Follow [these instructions](#) to register for SAM.gov and to receive a DUNS number.

3.5 Application Content

The application consists of the following required parts; any missing part will prevent the application from submission. **Applications that do not answer all questions will not score well in the review process.**

A. Project Information Form

Input this information directly into the form in e-grants and it will be used as the cover sheet for the application. You will need,

- Contact information for the Fiscal Agent (This is the agency named in the grant contract and responsible for the administration of the grant)
- The fiscal agent's federal and state identification numbers
- Fiscal agent's DUNS number (see 3.4)
- Contact information for the person/s responsible for programming, financials and contracts
- Lead agency's annual budget amount
- Brief project description and project's geographic information

B. VCET Information Form:

Applicants will input VCET staff information directly into e-grants. This form includes VCET commander, advisory board chair, prosecutor and administrative information as well as listing VCET partners, population served and staffing. (Information in this form is considered in scoring the VCET Partners and Staffing.)

C. Narrative (90 points):

Address the following in a seven page maximum Word document with ¾" margins, single-spaced and with a 12-point font size. When ready to submit, **upload the narrative as an attachment in e-grants**. The narrative should address the following issues (please number responses):

1. Partners and Staffing (30 Points):

- Provide additional detail to augment the VCET Information Form regarding responsibilities of partner agencies, advisory board composition and prosecutor involvement (addressing eligibility criteria 1, 2, 3 & 6).
- Summarize staffing roles, including commander, investigators, analysts, and administrative staff. If a current grantee, highlight any staffing changes from your 2020-21 grant.
- Include a brief summary of VCET staff recruitment, training, supervision, and removal.
- State if your VCET includes or borders tribal lands and if so, describe coordination with tribal law enforcement.
- Also highlight any other key partners, such as federal and state law enforcement and prosecutors or local probation, drug courts or other drug or gang programs.

2. Needs Statement (20 Points):

- Discuss the demographic, economic, and social conditions that contribute to drug abuse and distribution; firearm use and trafficking; and criminal activity in your geographic area.
- Detail the nature and scope of the drug threats in the VCET area. This can include law enforcement, student survey, treatment admission and overdose data.

- Provide a brief overview of the drug distribution networks in your area, noting typical transportation methods and connections to gangs or other criminal networks.
- Discuss violence related to drug abuse and drug distribution, including gang involvement.
- Address how the VCET serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

3. Operational Plan (25 Points):

- New grantees should describe VCET targets will be identified by analyzing relevant data and engaging the community to establish multijurisdictional investigation and prosecution priorities (eligibility criteria 4), including:
 - (a) Mid- and upper-level dealers
 - (b) Drug Seizures
 - (c) Gun Seizures
 - (d) Gang Disruption
 - (e) Violent Crimes
- Current grantees should summarize the outcomes previously achieved in addressing VCET priorities, including brief highlights of significant investigations that demonstrate the value of multijurisdictional coordination.
- Discuss how you have and will share intelligence/information, including gang identification (eligibility criteria 8), and coordinate efforts with other VCETs and local, state and federal agencies. AI
- Describe the role your VCET will play (alone or in collaboration with others) to prevent drug and violent criminal activity. Highlight any community outreach activities or prevention programs in which VCET staff have been involved.

4. Budget Narrative (15 Points):

- Provide the annual total VCET budget and describe the proposed local contributions from partner agencies to the VCET in 2022 including cash, personnel and in-kind materials and services. Current grantees should note the balance of local funds in your VCET operating account after grant reimbursement for the 2nd quarter of 2021 and balance of any VCET savings or contingency funds on 6/30/21.
- Note if there are any other state or federal program funds supporting this project, such as Anti-Heroin Task Force or High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area or from federal law enforcement partners such as DEA, ATF or FBI for operational support through purchase of vehicles, reimbursement for investigator overtime or provision of buy funds. Current grantees should estimate the amount that will be reimbursed for cooperative

investigations in the first half of 2021.

- Briefly explain the process used to manage pending seizures, asset forfeiture proceeds and other program income (addressing eligibility criteria 9 & 10).
Current grantees should provide total program income and expenditures in the first six months of 2021, and the balance on 6/30/21.
- Current grantees should highlight any funding requested that is an expansion to new cities or counties or the addition of new sworn or civilian personnel.
- The budget narrative may provide additional explanation of the proposed budget items and highlight increased costs of narcotics investigations and multijurisdictional partnerships.

The full grant budget is input directly into e-grants (see below).

D. Budget (10 Points):

Your budget should be consistent with your narrative, making it clear how each of the activities will be funded. The budget will cover a two-year period and all expenses must be listed and directly chargeable to the grant. When estimating costs, please show your calculations by including quantities, unit costs and other details. Only include grant funded expenses in the budget descriptions.

Enter the budget directly into e-grants. Directions for entering the budget are available in the [Application Guide](#).

Budget line items include:

Personnel, Payroll Taxes & Fringe, Contract Services, Travel, Training, Office Expenses, Program Expenses, and Other Expenses. Not all line items need to be used.

E. Multijurisdictional Entity Certification Requirements (eligibility criteria 11)

Minnesota State Statute 299A. 642, Subd 4(a) requires the commissioner of public safety to certify multijurisdictional entities established to combat gang and drug crime. VCET applicants should review certification requirements with their Advisory Board and the Chair should sign the Certification Requirement Form. *Applicants will upload this form into e-grants.*

F. Guidelines Manual Certification (eligibility criteria 5)

VCET Commander and Advisory Board chair certify that local VCET operations will be designed to comply with *Multijurisdictional Task Force Operating Procedures and Guidelines* maintained and updated by the Office of Justice Programs, in consultation with the Violent Crime Coordinating Committee, Professional Standards Subcommittee. *Applicants will upload this form into e-grants.*

G. Indirect costs and Documentation (optional)

Indirect costs, often referred to as overhead, are costs shared by the organization as a whole and most often are not able to be broken down within each program of the organization. Indirect costs can be requested in one of the following ways:

1. Budget expenses directly in the applicable budget categories.
2. Use the federally allowed de minimus rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC). MTDC calculation **excludes** equipment, rental costs, participant support costs (Direct Client Assistance), and the portion of each subcontract in excess of \$25,000.
3. Use your federally approved indirect cost rate. If the federally approved indirect cost rate has expired then indirect costs must be directly charged in appropriate budget categories.

Using the Indirect Rate Documentation form in the application, you will calculate and request the indirect costs amount entered in your application's budget. **Complete either the MDTC or federal rate request form and if using a federally approved rate upload a current copy of a current indirect costs agreement.**

H. Organizational Financial Information Form

This required form includes providing the fiscal agency's finance information and accounting practices. You will need the agency's fiscal year information, total revenue, federal expenditures as well as information on specific accounting practices. All applicants with total annual revenue of over \$750,000 will need to upload the most recent certified annual audit.

WHAT AN APPLICATION MUST INCLUDE TO BE FORWARDED FOR REVIEW: (e-grants will not let the application be submitted if any of these are missing)

- **Project Information form** must be completed
- **VCET Information form** must be completed
- **Narrative** addressing questions listed above in B must be uploaded
- **Budget** with calculations included
- **Multijurisdictional Entity Certification Requirements** upload signed form
- **Guidelines Manual Certification** upload signed form
- **Indirect Documentation Form** (if including indirect costs in budget)
- **Organization Financial Information** form

Note additional post-award requirements in Part 5.

RFP Part 4: Application Review Process

This is a competitive application process. A review committee made up experience criminal justice professionals will read and rate applications using a 100-point scale. The reviewers will meet **to** discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each application and responsiveness to the RFP.

VCET applications will be scored using the following scale:

Partners & Staffing	30 points
Threat Assessment	20 points
Operational Plan	25 points
Budget Narrative	15 points
<u>Budget Detail</u>	<u>10 points</u>
TOTAL	100 points

A final staff review will consider geographic locations, coordination with other federal, state, and local funding and past grantee performance. Timeliness and completeness of past grant financial and progress reporting is also considered. The Commissioner of Public Safety will make the final funding decisions and award notification will be by mail and email to applicants.

RFP Part 5: Post Award Requirements

- Pre Award Risk Assessment and Financial Review.** In accordance with state and federal grant management policies it is required to consider a grant applicant's past performance before awarding subsequent grants to them. State policy requires states to conduct a financial review prior to a grant award made of \$25,000 and higher to a nonprofit organization. The necessary information for these is provided in the financial information form in the application.
- Minnesota's Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion in Procurement**
 The State of Minnesota is committed to diversity and inclusion in its public procurement process. The goal is to ensure that those providing goods and services to the State are representative of our Minnesota communities and include businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. Creating broader opportunities for historically under-represented groups provides for additional options and greater competition in the marketplace, creates stronger relationships and engagement within our communities, and fosters economic development and equality.
 To further this commitment, the Department of Administration operates a program for Minnesota-based small businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and those with substantial physical disabilities. For additional information on this program, or to determine eligibility, please call 651-296- 2600 or go to the [OEP website](#) .
- Grant Contract Process.** After being selected for funding, OJP staff will work with the applicant to negotiate a final budget. The formal grant contract consists of the Grant Agreement, the Terms and Conditions, the Program Guidelines, as well as the work plan and budget. The Grant Agreement will be initiated, signed by grantee and OJP, and once fully executed it is then a legally binding agreement. Grant agreements not signed within 30 days of receipt may be canceled.
- Progress Reporting.** Grantees will be required to submit regular narrative reports and data in a prescribed manner. Grantees receiving federal JAG funds will also submit reports directly to

the Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) using the Performance Measurement Tool (PMT).

- **Grant Payments.** This is a cost reimbursement grant. Grantees will only be paid for eligible expenses (after the grant contract is fully executed) that are incurred and are consistent with the negotiated budget.
- **OJP Grant Manual.** Grantees, grantee subgrants and contracts agree to follow the OJP Grant Manual as part of the application process. The manual is a resource for how our office manages grants and covers topics such as grant administration policies, program modification policies, general accounting requirements, etc. [OJP Grant Manual](#)
- **Joint Powers Agreement (eligibility criteria 7).** An executed JPA involving all law enforcement and prosecution partners must be in place for calendar year 2022. It should be scanned and uploaded in e-grants by January 1, 2022.
- **Center for Task Force Training (CentTF).** The VCET Board Chair, Commander and Team Leaders (if applicable) should [register](#) for the online CentTF training. Once registered, they will gain access to the following training modules:
 - VCET Board Chair and Commander complete **Executive Leadership**
 - Commander (and Team Leaders) complete **Task Force Commander Leadership and Management**
 - Commander (and Team Leaders) complete **Safeguarding Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties in Task Force Operations**

Training certificates should be scanned and uploaded in e-grants by January 1, 2022.

RIGHT OF CANCELLATION

The State reserves the right to cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The State reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this Request for Proposals. The State does not intend to award a grant contract solely on the basis of any response made to this request, or pay for information solicited or obtained.